

The University of Chicago

THE SACRED MEAL IN THE OLDER
ROMAN RELIGION

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF LATIN LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1935

By
RUTH EDITH THOMAS

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to make a study of the sacred meal in the older Roman religion in order to determine the conception which the people had regarding the deities and the relation of these deities to the life of the time as it reveals itself by the eating of food in the ritual. This has involved the details of the meal itself as given in the classical authors, the identification of the divinity concerned, the form of his presence, and the way in which he participated in the rite. It has also been necessary to consider who the worshippers were and whether they regarded the food as being the incarnation of the deity or merely as being consecrated by contact with something which was sacred to him or in which he dwelt. Furthermore, the purpose for which the meal was held and the relative importance of that purpose in the lives of those concerned have entered into the problem. The approximate date of the origin of the feast and the place in which it was established often play a part also.

In a number of cases it is impossible, due to insufficient data, to make a definite decision regarding all of these things; but in such instances whenever information has been found which would show that in other places in the world in a similar stage of civilization under similar circumstances a like ceremony occurred, this has been used as a means of conjecture as to the Italic situation. Moreover, throughout the whole work an effort has been made to look beneath the formal or semi-formal rites with which the classical authors were familiar in order to perceive the doubts and fears, as well as the hopes and aspirations, of a primitive

people struggling to establish a settled life and to overcome the forces of nature through the aid of dimly defined super-beings who might assist if properly propitiated.

The meals have been divided into four classes: 1) those in which the eating of the god took place; 2) those in which invisible deities were present at the tables on which the food offered was spread; 3) those in which the gods participated in visible form; and 4) those in which--as well as in the two special classes first mentioned--the deities were present but invisible. In the discussion there has not been included a treatment of the sacred meals which were of Grecian origin. But some Greek elements do appear, as in the case of the Saturnalia, when they are a part of the later development of a feast which had its beginnings on Italian soil.

I EATING THE GOD

In the first division three meals are included: 1) The Sacrament of the Feriae Latinae, 2) The Sacred Meal of the Wedding, and 3) The Drinking of the New Wine. The form of these lies in obscurity for Latin literature gives little evidence; but the conception was that the deity was actually in the food or drink used.

1. The Sacrament of the Feriae Latinae

This idea of the deity being present in the food or drink is primitive but world-wide and is among Roman meals best illustrated by the first, the Latin Festival, at which during April¹ in the grove on the Alban Mountain the Latin cities through the medium of their representatives offered to Jupiter Latiaris pastoral products² and partook of the flesh of the taurus.³ The utensils found on the Alban Mountain are of the most ancient type while the use of milk and cheese and the lack of wine indicate an age previous to that in which agriculture was prevalent.⁴ Then, too, the eating of the flesh of the taurus in sacramental fashion may very well go back to the time when cattle were so sacred that they were killed only on solemn occasions when the clan renewed its kinship and its pledge of loyalty.⁵ Greek parallels, such as the sacrifice of the calf at Tenedos,⁶ and also material like that

¹Mommsen in C. I. L. 6. p. 455 (Tabula Fer. Lat.); Chron. 80 ff.; Varro L. L. 6. 25; Macrobi. 1. 16, 6.

²Cic. De Div. 1. 11, 18; Dionys. 4. 49.

³Arnob. 2. 68; Livy 41. 16. Cf. Marquardt, Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer, 3. p. 296, n. 4; and Aust, in Roscher's Lexicon 21. 690. See also Dionys. 4. 49; Varro, L. L. 6. 25; Cic. pro. Planc. 23; Plin. N. H. 3. 69; Serv. ad Aen. I. 211.

⁴W. Helbig, Die Italiker in der Poebene, p. 71.

⁵Plato, Leges 6. 782; Pausanias 1. 28, 10; Varro R. R. 2.

5, 3-5.

⁶For discussion and classical references see Farnell, The Cults of the Greek States, 5. 165 ff.

contained in the studies of such authors as Smith¹ and Tylor² enable us to go a step farther as they show that at this stage in the development of religious thought the god is regarded as incarnate in the animal. Therefore when the representatives of the Latin towns partook of the flesh they were 'eating the god', Juppiter Latiaris, and pledging most solemn allegiance to him and to each other.³

The importance of the rite is shown in that the whole ceremony had to be repeated if a single town were omitted⁴ and that there was a truce among all of the cities during the time of the festival in order that nothing might interfere with the attendance of those concerned or with the progress of the meal itself.⁵ That Rome had great regard for the rite is indicated by the fact that the consul or, in case he could not be present, a dictator appointed Feriarum Latinarum causa must attend.⁶ Neither were the consuls allowed to go from Rome to their provinces before the festival took place.⁷ Although the deity, Juppiter Latiaris, remained constant throughout the centuries, the presiding officer and the group who partook of the meal must have varied. Doubtless Jupiter was worshipped in a number of the towns of Latium under different epithets.⁸ That Juppiter Latiaris became the god of this

¹Religion of the Semites, p. 277 ff.

²Primitive Culture, 2. 231 ff.

³Farnell, The Cults of the Greek States, 3. 3, gives an example of a Mexican oath accompanied by the partaking of the earth.

⁴Livy 22. 1, 9. See also Livy 37. 3, 4-7; 40. 45, 2-3; 41. 16.

⁵Macrobius 1. 16, 16. Cf. the truce during the Greek festivals, Xen. Hell. 4. 7, 2 ff.

⁶Varro, L. L. 6. 25; Macrobius 1. 16, 6; Pomponius, Digestorum Libris 1. 2, 2, 33; Tac. Ann. 6. 11; C. I. L. 6, p. 455 (Tabula Fer. Lat.); Mommsen, Chron. p. 80 ff.; Staatsr. 1. 642 f.; for a list of the Praefecti urbi Feriarum Latinarum causa see Werner, De Feriis Latinis p. 41 ff.

⁷Livy 21. 63, 8, 9; 22. 1, 5-6; 44. 19, 4; Dio Cass. 46. 33, 4.

⁸C. I. L. 14. 2852; 3555; Hist. Aug. Maxim. et Balb. 5. 3; Macrobius 1. 12, 17; Livy 1. 2, 6; Plin. N. H. 3. 56; Serv. ad Aen. 1. 259. Cf. Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, p. 123 f.

festival was due to the fact that he was the chief divinity of Alba Longa when that city attained the leadership of the League. During the hegemony of Alba Longa the presiding officer of the festival must have been from Alba Longa, but later when Rome controlled the cities concerned her representative took charge.¹

2. The Sacred Meal of the Wedding

In the case of the rite at the confarreate marriage² there has been some disagreement among scholars as to whether there actually was a sacramental meal. Some think that the bride and the groom did not eat of the sacred cake, while others believe that the matter cannot be definitely determined.³ Fowler⁴ says "the cult title (*Farreus*) should indicate that the god was believed to be immanent in the cake of *far* rather than that it was offered to him, and if so, the use of the cake was sacramental"; and de Marchi⁵ agrees with him, while Laing⁶ clearly expresses his opinion: they both partook of the sacred cake, *libum farreum*. The greater amount of evidence seems to be on the side of the latter group for, although the classical writers do not state specifically that the cake was eaten by the bride and the groom, they certainly imply this in such phrases as *per fruges et molam salsam coniungebantur*⁷ and *παπαγεῖον ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωρίᾳ*.⁸ In addition this, Rossbach

¹Cf. Dionys. 4. 49.

²Gaius, 1. 112; Ulpian 9; Dionys. 2. 25; Serv. *ad Verg. Georg.* 1. 31, *ad Verg. Aen.* 4. 374; Plin. 18. 3.

³Rossbach, (*Untersuchungen über die Römische Ehe*, p. 107 ff.) definitely argues that all of the cake was burned, but others such as Dieterich (*Mithrasliturgie*, p. 122) and Leonhard (Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, *Real Encyc. s. v. Confarreatio*) are not certain which took place. See also Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, p. 387; Marquardt, *Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer*, 71, p. 50.

⁴*Religious Experience of the Roman People*, 141. n. 46.

⁵*Il Culto Privato*, p. 156.

⁶*Survivals of Roman Religion*, p. 30.

⁷Serv. *ad Verg. Georg.* 1. 31.

⁸Dionys. 2. 25.

himself¹ admits that the custom of eating the food was prevalent among other peoples and we know from the study of other sacred meals, such as the Saturnalia,² that this prevalence is a fairly good argument that the cake was eaten by the Roman bride and groom.

That Jupiter received his share of the sacrifice by its being burnt there is no doubt, but because Ulpian³ says Farreo... et sollemni sacrificio facto, in quo panis quoque farreus and Servius⁴ uses the words fruges et molam salsam, there has been some discussion as to whether other things were included. Marquardt⁵ and Rossbach⁶ think that there were; but Karlowa⁷ maintains that there was simply an offering of the cake of far because der farreus panis und die mola salsa sind dem Stoff nach identisch und nur in der Form verschieden. The latter seems more reasonable as there is no animal mentioned in connection with this part of the ceremony, and the emphasis of the whole rite seems to center about the libum farreum.

Hence it seems that the Roman bride and groom in sharing the sacred cake with the god entered into communion with him and pledged fidelity to him and to each other. Furthermore, this sacramental meal was important in both private and public life. As Fowler⁸ says, the numina had to be considered in every act of importance within a family group for to maintain the sacra of the family was a solemn obligation. Since the bride was to share in them, the early Romans especially would take unusual precautions that the proper religious ceremony be performed. The importance

¹Untersuchungen über die Römische Ehe, p. 107.

²See p. 23.

³9.

⁴Ad Verg. Georg. 1. 31.

⁵Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer 7¹, p. 51, n. 4.

⁶Untersuchungen über die Römische Ehe, p. 103.

⁷Die Formen der Römischen Ehe und Manus, p. 5.

⁸Religious Experience of the Roman People, p. 274.

of the ritual to the state is attested by the fact that the flamines maiores, the flaminica, and the rex sacrorum had to be born of confarreate marriage¹ and be themselves married by confarreatio and that later, when the number of persons qualified for these offices were too few, it was found necessary to change the regulations.²

3. The Drinking of the New Wine

Pliny³ and Festus⁴ indicate that before the people first tasted the wine from the casks filled during the preceding autumn a libation (April 23) was poured out in honor of Jupiter.⁵ Moreover, Ovid⁶ shows that the Romans regarded the god as present though he was not seen. The conception here, as in other libations, was originally, perhaps, that the liquid when it disappeared was drunk by the deity.⁷ Since the Italian Jupiter and not Liber, the Roman god approximating the Greek Bacchus, was the divinity of the rite, it is possible that the ceremony arose in a prehistoric time when the people thought of the first fruits as being sacred to the gods. Jevons⁸ gives a number of illustrations to show that the universal conception of the worshipper in the offering of these is that of thanksgiving and then says that the next step is prayer for favor in the future. But if Frazer⁹ is right in thinking that the primitive people believed that the fruits of

¹Gaius l. 112; Serv. ad Aen. 4. 103, 374; Suet. Caes. 1.

²Tac. Ann. 4. 16.

³N. H. 18. 287.

⁴Lindsay p. 374, 65.

⁵Ovid (Fast. 4. 877-78) says the Vinalia was also a festival of Venus, but Varro (L. L. 6. 16) says: Hic dies Iovis, non Veneris. Cf. Macrobian Sat. 1. 4. 6.

⁶Fast. 4. 901-2.

⁷Smith, Religion of the Semites, p. 213.

⁸Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion, pp. 180 ff.

⁹The Fasti of Ovid, 2. 426-28.

the earth were "not so much owned as animated by divine spirits; so that to eat of them was to partake of the body of the god", one may with some reason think that the early Romans also believed that they drank the deity himself when they drank the first wine from the cask and thus became imbued with his spirit. The importance of this rite in the beginning stages of civilization is shown by the fact that those who failed to offer first fruits of any kind were severely punished.¹

¹Frazer, The Fasti of Ovid, 2. 425-26.

II THE INVISIBLE DEITY AT THE TABLE

There was in early Italy a conception which, perhaps, made the introduction of the Greek lectisternium a natural development in Roman religion, for the people seemed on some occasions to believe that the gods, though unseen, were present at the banquet table. The occasions which show evidence of this were 1) The Feasts in Honor of the Dead, 2) The Feast of Ovens, and 3) The Feast in Honor of Juppiter Dapalis.

1. The Feasts in Honor of the Dead

Since the spirits of the dead were regarded by the Romans as gods¹ who might bring them good or evil, there were a number of festivals in their honor. The Silicernium seems to have been a meal held at the grave on the day of burial or its anniversary by the familia of the deceased for the purpose of lustration through the eating of the farcimen.² As it was consumed at the tomb and Tertullian³ says that the dead were thought to be praesentes et conrecumbentes, the conception must have been that they were present to share in the feast although the food assigned to them did not physically disappear.⁴ If, however, the sacrifice of the porcus which Cicero⁵ mentions was a part of the ceremony of the meal, the spirits received a share of the offering by its

¹Varro in Plut. Q. R. 14. Cf. also Cor. Nepos, Frag. 2 (Winstedt's Ed., Oxford, 1904); C. I. L. 10. 4255, 8249; 6. 3597, 29109, 29852a, 9659, 31746; 5. 3283-90; 11. 4327. See Laing, Survivals of Roman Religion, pp. 78-79; Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, pp. 232-3.

²Nonius, ed. Quicherat, 48. 4; Festus, ed. Lindsay, p. 294. Cf. Serv. ad Aen. 5. 92.

³De Test. Anim. 4.

⁴See p. 13.

⁵De Leg. 2. 22, 57.

being burnt on an altar.

After nine days of mourning sacrifices were made to the dead and a *cena novendialis* took place.¹ Although the Latin authors do not give any definite information as to the foods used for this specific meal, Marquardt² is probably right in thinking that those named in connection with funeral feasts in general were used for this one.³ If we may apply Tertullian's expression to this as to other meals in honor of the dead, it seems that the *Manes* were here also regarded as invisibly present at the table partaking of the food in a spiritual manner.⁴ The *familia* of the deceased, who had laid aside their mourning,⁵ by eating with these spirits entered into communion with them in order that they might do no harm but rather might be assisting agents in the daily life.

In February was held the *Parentalia*, beginning on the thirteenth⁶ and closing with the *Feralia* on the twenty-first,⁷ or--as Lydus⁸ would have us believe--with the *Caristia* on the twenty-second. Among the foods used were the flesh of sheep, pigs, and cattle,⁹ salt, lentils,¹⁰ bread,¹¹ milk,¹² oil,¹³ blood,¹⁴ and wine.¹⁵ The liquids seem to have been poured out in libation

¹Porph. *ad Hor. Epod.* 17. 48; Tac. *Ann.* 6. 5.

²*Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer* 7¹. p. 380.

³Juv. 5. 84; Plut. *Crassus* 19.

⁴See p. 13 f.

⁵Marquardt, *Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer*, 7¹, p. 380; Cic. *in Vat.* 12. 30.

⁶C. I. L. 12 pp. 258, 309.

⁷Ov. *Fast.* 2. 570.

⁸De *Mens.* 4. 24.

⁹Verg. *Aen.* 5. 96 ff. Cf. Arnob. 7. 20.

¹⁰Ov. *Fast.* 2. 538; Plut. *Crass.* 19.

¹¹Ov. *Fast.* 2. 539.

¹²Verg. *Aen.* 3. 66-68; cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 3. 67. Silius Italicus, 16. 309; Arnob. 7. 20.

¹³Arnob. 7. 20.

¹⁴Verg. *Aen.* 3. 66-68. Cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 3. 67.

¹⁵Verg. *Aen.* 5. 96 ff. Cf. Arnob. 7. 20; Fest. ed. Lindsay, p. 262; Verg. *Aen.* 5. 77, 98; Silius Italicus 16. 309; Ausonius, *Epitaph* 36. 1.

at the grave.¹ The Manes also received their share of this food in part by the usual burning on an altar;² and apparently the conception, as I have shown in connection with the cena novendialis, was that they were present at the table but were invisible as they shared the meal with their kinsmen--or, in the case of one of more prominent position,³ with the whole related group--and listened to prayers for assistance.⁴ On the last day of the parentalia proper and the only one which is marked in the calendars as a public festival was the Feralia.⁵ The food of the sacred meal and the manner of offering seem to have been the same as that of the other days; neither do the deities nor the attitude of the people toward them seem to have changed. The Rosaria (or Rosalia) and the dies violares were special forms of the Parentalia and occurred under various conditions and at various times, usually in May or June,⁶ while the Larentalia, celebrated on December 23 at the so-called grave of Larentia,⁷ may have been an older form of it.⁸

Upon the death of an outstanding person sometimes a feast was given either immediately after the funeral or upon the anniversary;⁹ but in all of these the real religious significance in the Italian sense of the word seems to have been lost and I mention them only as meals which may originally have been in part suggested by the early family sacra. There were also sacra privata

¹Frazer, The Fasti of Ovid, 2. 436.

²Verg. Aen. 5. 96 ff. Cf. Arnob. 7. 20.

³See note 2.

⁴Verg. Aen. 5. 58 ff.

⁵C. I. L. 12 p. 212, 223, 310; Varro L. L. 6. 13; Macrobius 4. 14; Paulus, ed. Lindsay, p. 85.

⁶C. I. L. 5. 4410; 10. 444; 6. 10234, 10239; 5. 5272; 10. 3792.

⁷Macr. 1. 10; Lactant. Inst. 1. 20; Ov. Fast. 3. 57; Cell. 7. 7; Varro L. L. 6. 23; Festus, s. v. Larentalia.

⁸Swissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, p. 233.

⁹Liv. 39. 46; Dio Cass. 37. 51. See also Suet. Jul. 26; Liv. 41. 28; C. I. L. 10. 444; 11. 4391; 10. 5853; 6. 9626, 10297; 10. 1880; 5. 7489.

to which the terms parentalia and parentatio were applied and which took place on the date of the anniversary of the birth, death, or burial of the person for whom the rite was performed.¹ The type of meal and the relation of deity and worshippers seem to have been the same as those in the case of the days set aside for this purpose. In fact it is quite possible that the Parentalia was a direct development of these earlier celebrations. The importance of all the rite is shown by the fact that from the thirteenth to the twenty-first of February the temples were closed, the magistrates appeared without the insignia of office, and no business of importance could be undertaken.²

In the various phases, then, of the Italic meal in honor of the dead the conception of their divine character is never lost; neither is the purpose of obtaining their good will in order that they may bring aid to the worshipper ever lacking. The latter had a direct contact with the spirit of the relative for he was at the grave itself and the food used was of the kind always sacrificed to the powers of the underworld.³ Yet the plane is quite above that of the magic suggested in the earlier rite of the Lemuria⁴ or that of the Feralia as described by Ovid in the Fasti, book 2, lines 571-582. There was apparently no fear of the spirits so long as all due obligations had been met. It was a time of memorial, of renewal of relationships, and of friendly petition centered about the good cheer of a family banquet in which the departed returned to share.

2. The Feast of Ovens

Since the details of the Feast of Ovens lie in obscurity

¹Macrobius l. 16, 25. Cf. Verg. Aen. 5. 46-48; also Marquardt, Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer 6. 311.

²Ov. Fast. 2. 557-562; Lydus de Mens. 4. 24.

³Cf. Arnob. 7. 20.

⁴Ov. Fast. 5. 421 ff.; Mommsen C. I. L. 1². 309.

I hesitate somewhat to include it in a discussion of the sacred meals of the Romans.¹ Paulus² says: Fornacalia feriae institutae sunt farris torrendi gratia quod ad fornacem quae in pistrinis erat sacrificium fieri solebat. Ovid³ seems to indicate that the celebration was in honor of Fornax, the goddess of the oven, and, as this type of worship would take place in an early stage of a people's development, the first celebration must have been in the home.⁴ Yet in the same passage he shows clearly that at a later period it was in charge of the curiae for he mentions the curio maximus as presiding over all. In addition to this was the feast of fools on February 17 for those who had failed to observe the rite⁵--an indication of its importance.

Fowler⁶ and Steuding⁷ think it quite possible that Dionysius,⁸ although he does not mention the name of the occasion, describes the Fornacalia. If so, it seems that for the purpose of communion the gods were present with the people at the table, but as no images are mentioned they must have been invisible. Although it seems strange to the modern reader, the fact that the food supposed to be eaten by the divinity did not actually disappear would not have troubled the early Italian.⁹ Since the

¹The following discussion is largely based upon Gilbert, Rom im Altertum 2. 129 ff. and upon Fowler's addition (Roman Festivals, p. 304) to this interpretation by the statement that Dionysius was probably referring to this festival in 2. 23. This passage gives the only definite statement that a meal took place and it certainly does not designate the Fornacalia as the occasion, although we know that this festival formed a part of the sacra of the curiae and that the festivals of the curiae were two, the Fordicidia and the Fornacalia.

²Paulus, ed. Lindsay, p. 83; 93.

³Fast. 2. 525-32.

⁴Ov. Fast. 2. 521-524. For analogous examples see Frazer, The Fasti of Ovid, 2. 430-31. Cf. Plin. N. H. 18. 7-8; 107.

⁵Ov. Fast. 2. 513-32; Festus, ed. Lindsay pp. 254; 317; Paulus, ed. Lindsay, p. 256; p. 316; Varro, L. L. 6. 13.

⁶Roman Festivals, p. 304.

⁷Roscher, Lex. l. 1499, s. v. Fornax.

⁸2. 23.

⁹Tylor Primitive Culture p. 389.

meal was avowedly in honor of Fornax,¹ the plural term *θεοις*, in case Dionysius is describing the Fornacalia, may possibly be explained by the fact that each family represented had an oven in its home and, true to the spirit of animism, thought a deity was present in it. But honor might have been paid to other gods also, for both Ovid² and Dionysius³ seem to associate the offering of first fruits with the offering to the oven and Pliny⁴ very definitely connects this feast with the lustration of the fields and thus with agricultural deities. Possibly some of the first fruits of the preceding season had been stored for this very occasion, just as the meal from the first ears of corn was kept by the Vestals for later use.⁵ This would indicate a definite agricultural purpose, as well as make the food even more sacred⁶ and the eating of it an act of communion. It would also increase the importance of the occasion, which would deal not only with the deity in charge of one phase of the preparation but also with the production of the food essential to life. The crude type of utensils used and the simplicity of the meal, in which the far was prominent but the flesh of animals lacking, along with the primitive elements already mentioned point to a very early period of Italian agricultural life free from Greek influence.

3. The Feast in Honor of Juppiter Dapalis

With regard to the third meal in the group in which the invisible deity seems to have been present at the table--that held in honor of Juppiter Dapalis before the sowing took place⁷--the evidence is not entirely clear. Cato speaks only of the culigna

¹Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 429 ff.

²Fast. 2. 520.

³De 23.

⁴N. H. 18. 8.

⁵Serv. ad Verg. Ecl. 8. 82.

⁶Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 426.

⁷Cato R. R. 132.

and of the urna vini while Paulus¹ says only daps apud antiquos dicebatur res divina and adds quod vocabulum ex Graeco deducitur, apud quos id genus epularum daps dicitur. Moreover, dapem is the first word in the chapter from Cato and it is used six times in the twelve lines. No verb commonly employed by classical authors with reference to the burning of a sacrifice on an altar is found in the passage, but polluceo is used four times. Walde² says this means auf die Tafel aufsetzen; bes. als Opfer vorsetzen, opfern.³ Hence I am inclined to believe that the manner of offering in this meal was not that of the burning of food on an altar but rather that of placing it on a table at which the deity, though invisible, was present to share the feast with the worshippers, as in the sacra of the curiae⁴ and the funeral banquets.⁵ This would be a natural growth from the earlier conception of the god being in the food itself, a belief which Fowler⁶ thinks was at the basis of the name, Juppiter Dapalis.

The participants of the meal were evidently the members of the rustic household and, although this holiday accompanied by the eating of the assaria pecuina and the drinking of wine must have been a somewhat jovial occasion, the attitude seems to be that of meticulous care that the ceremony be performed with unerring accuracy.⁷ The purpose is probably best shown by the last sentence of the chapter from Cato: postea dape facta serito milium, panicum, alium, lentim; for it was in honor of Jupiter, the kindly god of the sky, that the feast was held and to him there was

¹Ed. Lindsay, p. 68.

²Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, p. 597.

³Cf. Ernout and Meillet Dictionnaire Etymologique de la Langue Latine, p. 749.

⁴Dionys. 2. 23.

⁵See p. 10 f.

⁶Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 141, n. 46.

⁷Cf. Cato R. R. 132.

supplication that the seed which was to be sown should be blessed.
In the earliest period this was of the utmost importance.

III MEALS IN HONOR OF VISIBLE DEITIES

Although in the earliest time the Romans had no images of their gods, in the classical period images were present at a number of feasts; e. g., the meal at the crossroads; the ordinary family meal, the Caristia, the Saturnalia, and at some of those of the Fratres Arvales.

1. The Feast at the Crossroads

The first of these, the feast at the crossroads, occurred between the Saturnalia and January 5.¹ Dionysius² informs us that the gods received their portion of the food in the honey cakes which were offered on the altar built where the roads met. In the same passage he gives the impression that the Lares, whose images at least in later times were present,³ received their part through the burning of the offering. Then the people ate. Propertius⁴ speaks of a pig, but some scholars⁵ doubt whether he was referring to the Compitalia. If he was, it seems safe to assume that the usual portions⁶ were offered on the altar. It is reasonable to think that the people ate cakes; and other references, such as the uncta compitalia of the Catalepton,⁷ seem to indicate that the eating of the meat was possibly included in the festive occa-

¹Mommsen C. I. L. 1¹ 305; Gell. 10. 24, 3; Cic. in Pis. 4. 8; Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, p. 168.

²4. 14.

³Suet. Aug. 31. 4.

⁴4. 1, 23.

⁵Drexler, in Roscher, Lex. 11² 1873; Laing, The Origin of the Cult of the Lares, Classical Philology, 16. 21; Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, p. 167.

⁶Fowler, The Religious Experience of the Roman People, p. 180 f.

⁷13. 27.

sion. There was a plenteous supply of wine and the season was one of good will on the part of all concerned.¹ A characteristic feature was that not those who were freeborn but slaves made the offering.² Fowler³ says that "in the constant absence of the owner....the worship of the Lar at the Compitalia or in the house came to be more and more the right of the villicus and his wife". If so, the rites must have been performed originally by the farmer, the head of the Italian family. At any rate that the meal was fundamentally rustic cannot be doubted; hence it probably arose during the early age of Italian agriculture as one of the joyous festivals after the work of the farm was done,⁴ but the celebration was not limited to the rural group.⁵

The purpose of the meal of the Compitalia has been much discussed because the origin and the nature of the Lares have been matters of dispute. In the past many scholars have thought that it was in honor of the dead but later research has shown the inadequacy of this theory.⁶ The Lares Compitales were worshipped as the tutelary deities of the crossroads, a place always held as of religious significance among primitive peoples,⁷ but there seems no reason to think, as Frazer⁸ does, that they were beings "who aimed at taking the lives of men and women, both free and slave". Surely Augustus would not have associated his genius⁹ with malig-

¹Cato, R. R. 57; Persius 4. 28; Dionysius 4. 14.

²Dionys. 4. 14; Cato R. R. 5.

³Religious Experience of the Roman People, p. 78.

⁴Pliny (N. H. 36. 204), however, says that the Compitalia was founded by Tarquinius Priscus and Macrobius (17, 34 ff.) that it was restored by Tarquinius Superbus.

⁵Dionys. 4. 14.

⁶Laing, The Origin of the Cult of the Lares, Classical Philology 16. 124 ff. Cf. Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, 171 ff. See also Frazer, Fasti of Ovid 2. 454 ff.

⁷Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 459 ff. gives a number of examples in proof of this.

⁸The Fasti of Ovid 2. 455.

⁹Ov. Fast. 5. 145; Hor. Carm. 4. 5, 34.

nant spirits. It seems much more logical to think that in later as in earlier times homage was paid through the meal to deities who presided over the community in the immediate vicinity of the crossroads and who had power to protect and assist those who lived on adjacent farms and trod the diverging ways.¹

In the earliest period there could have been no images of the Lares as the Romans did not so represent their deities, but the rural worshippers no doubt regarded them as present to receive the offering just as did the urban plebeian of imperial times.² Although I can find no definite evidence that in the rites in the city the people shared the food, it is not impossible that such was the case at least on some occasions, for Dionysius³ seems to associate quite closely the rites and the purpose of the earlier and the later periods.⁴ The intimate relation of the common people of Rome to this ceremony is shown by the fact that Augustus used it in attaching the populace to himself.

2. The Family Meal

At the dinner in the Roman home before the secundae mensae an offering was made to the household gods by placing a portion of the food from the table in the fire on the hearth.⁵ Wissowa⁶ thinks that the offering was originally to the Penates and he also believes that Ovid⁷ describes the master or mistress of the house as either giving the platter containing the offering of food to a slave or passing it from hand to hand to the person sitting at the

¹Tibull. 1. 1, 19-20; Cic. de Leg. 11. 27.

²Suet. Aug. 31. 4.

³4. 14.

⁴If there was a meal in the city, those in charge of it were composed of different groups from time to time. Cf. Liv. 34. 7, 2; Asconius ad Cic. in Pis. p. 7 ed. Orelli.

⁵Serv. ad Aen. 1. 730; 11. 211.

⁶Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 162, n. 1.

⁷Fast. 6. 310; 2. 633-34.

end of the table, who placed it on the hearth for the deities. The latter theory is based upon the fact that Ovid¹ says in early times in Rome the family gathered around the dining table placed immediately in front of the hearth. But in the more pretentious homes the focus was not in the atrium and the deities were placed on the table.² The importance of the patella in the household is suggested by the fact that it is mentioned frequently in Latin literature³ and, whether made of earthenware⁴ or--as later--of silver, it was so sacred that it was a sacrilege for a human being to eat from it.⁵ In the earlier period meal and salt seem to have been the articles of food offered⁶--probably because they were common constituents of the early Italian's diet--but apparently other foods were used.⁷ There was also a libation of wine,⁸ but obviously not in the earliest days before the vine was cultivated. The participants were the members of the familia and the one who presided was normally the pater familias, but the villicus seems also to have done so.⁹ That the meal was eaten for the purpose of obtaining the food essential for life cannot be questioned, and the attitude of the Romans in the religious ceremony in connection with it is a debated question. The remark of Pliny¹⁰ with regard to portions which had fallen to the floor may pertain to this for among other things he says: in mensa utique id reponi adolerique

¹Fast. 6. 305.

²Petron. 60.

³Liv. 26. 36, 6; Macrob. 4. 4. 3; Hor. Od. 2. 16, 14; Pers. 3, 25; Val. Max. 4. 4, 3; Plin. N. H. 33. 153.

⁴Tibull. 1. 1, 37-38.

⁵Cic. de Fin. 2. 7, 22.

⁶Hor. Od. 3. 23, 20; Lygdamus 4. 40; Verg. Aen. 5. 745.

⁷Menipp. frg. 265 Buech.

⁸Verg. Aen. 1. 736; Dio Cass. 51. 19, 7; Petron. 60; Hor. Od. 4. 5, 32. See also Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 162; 173, n. 5.

⁹Fowler The Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 78.

¹⁰N. H. 28. 27.

ad Larem piatio est. Wissowa¹ thinks that the sacrifice made consecrated the food of the whole meal so that when any of it was dropped it had to be given to the gods. But Samter² disagrees with him, principally because in Greece and among other peoples the food which fell to the floor was thought to be for poor souls who they believed lived about the house. While the argument of parallel cases often has weight and may even here be right, Wissowa's view seems more logical; for, as Fowler³ points out, the offering was a true sacrificium and in the early period of Italian life the part given to the deity made the whole sacred.⁴ It may also be well to note that the Romans offered a prayer before eating.⁵ One may conclude, then, that there was a strong religious element in the family meal and that through the offering of the food there was communion with the household gods. But later, although the forms were retained, it is doubtful whether much of real religious significance survived.

3. The Meal of the Caristia

On what Lydus⁶ indicates as the last day of the Parentalia occurred a family meal which seems to have been conducted somewhat in the manner of a picnic to which each brought supplies.⁷ Of these Martial⁸ implies that the chief article of diet was the flesh of birds. Ovid⁹ speaks of the Lares as present in the form of images to receive their share of the food in the same manner, perhaps, as at the regular family meal. The participants, united

¹Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 162.

²Familienfeste der Griechen und Römer p. 107 ff.

³Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 172.

⁴See pp. 5, 32 f., and 34.

⁵Quintilian Decl. 301, p. 582 ff., Burman. Cf. Marquardt, Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer 6. 126.

⁶De Mens. 4. 24.

⁷Malalas, p. 180; cf. C. I. L. 6. 10234; Val. Max. 2. 1, 8.

⁸Mart. 9. 54-55.

⁹Fast. 2. 633-35.

by kinship, met in all kindness and good will for this fitting climax of the Parentalia.¹ It is one of the most ideal pictures of Roman family life which have come down to us and is an expression of thanksgiving by those still living, as well as a pledge of loyalty to the Lares and to each other. The age-long conception of kinship and friendship² on the part of those who eat together formed a close bond between the divine and the human members of the group.

4. The Feasting on the Saturnalia

On December 17 was held the Saturnalia, the feast in honor of Saturn,³ at which during the classical period there was a lectisternium and the city was filled with festive cries as a spirit of absolute freedom prevailed.⁴ But it was in the private homes that hilarity and good will reached their height. The pig sacrificed seems to have been the principal article of food⁵ while feasting of slaves and drinking were outstanding features.⁶ Since it is a well known fact that the Saturnalia described by the classical writers was celebrated in a Greek rather than in a Roman manner⁷ it is necessary to investigate the evidence for the ear-

¹Val. Max. 2. 1, 8; Ov. Fast. 2. 619-632.

²Smith Religion of the Semites pp. 247 and 251.

³When the Julian calendar changed the number of days in the month there was confusion and Augustus, to remove the difficulty, appointed December 17, 18, and 19 for the celebration. Later this was increased even more, although early in the history of the festival the merrymaking lasted several days longer than the religious rites. See Macrobi. 1. 7; 1. 10, 1. 14, 1. Dio. Cass. 59. 6; Suet. Cal. 17.

⁴Dionys. 6. 1; Liv. 2. 21, 2; 22. 1, 19; Macrobi. 1. 10, 18; Petron. 58; Mart. 11. 2, 5; Cass. Dio 60. 19, 3; Fowler Roman Festivals p. 271. Cf. Mart. 14. 1; Wissowa, in Roscher, Lex. 4. 439.

⁵Mart. 14. 70; Hor. Od. 3. 17, 14 ff.; Lydus de Mens. 4. 158; Hist. Aug. Alex. Sev. 37. 6; Fowler, Roman Festivals p. 272; Marquardt Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer p. 587.

⁶Lucian Sat. 2; Statius Silv. 1. 6, 5; Cato R. R. 57; Hor. Sat. 2. 3, 4-6; Mart. 11. 6; 11, 15, 5; 14. 1, 9; GeII. 2. 24, 3.

⁷Cf. Fowler Roman Festivals p. 268 ff.; Nilsson, in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll Real. Encyc. 11 A, 203; Wissowa, Roscher Lex. 4. 427 ff.

lier period. And it is the nature of the deity which must largely explain the fundamental characteristics and purpose of his meal. Because he was a god of agriculture and particularly of sowing¹ it is reasonable to suppose that the cult was founded in the rural sections where he was worshipped by the farmer and his laborers after the strenuous work of the year was over. Then it was probably the private feast which gave rise to the public cult in Rome where approximately the same ritual would be followed. This, as other rural festivals in which a sacrifice was made,² probably included a meal although it is not mentioned previous to the lectisternium of 217 B. C. What features of the later meal already existed in the earlier it is impossible to determine, but the fact that the ancients³ associated the Saturnalia with the Compitalia may be suggestive. Both came at the season of rest for the ploughman and the joyous, carefree holiday atmosphere pervaded them.⁴ In both the slaves enjoyed unusual freedom and privileges and in both also the puzzling puppets appeared in some form.⁵ These things may not be significant; yet it is not reasonable to think that they accompanied an Italian meal in one case but were exclusively Greek accretions in the other. The feasting and drinking which have been noted as most prominent in the Roman rite are so universally common in festivals of this type that to give examples is unnecessary.⁶ Furthermore, the features attendant upon

¹Festus, ed. Lindsay p. 325; Arnob. 4. 9; Augustin C. D. 7. 13; Macrobian Sat. 1. 10, 19. For a full discussion see Wissowa in Roscher Lex. 4. 427 f.

²Cf. Ovid Fast. 2. 655 ff.

³For instance, Cato R. R. 57.

⁴Cf. Lucian Sat. 2 and Dionys. 4. 14.

⁵Cf. Mart. 14. 182; Macrobian. 1. 11, 1; Paul. p. 121, 239.

⁶Instances of feasting and drinking, however, may be found in Brand Popular Antiquities 2. 16-33; and Frazer Golden Bough, 9. 134, 136; 7. 151 ff.

the Saturnalia find reasonably close parallels in the shouting,¹ the temporary freedom of slaves,² the giving of gifts,³ the athletic feats,⁴ and, to a certain degree, the sigillaria and the king,⁵ all of which exist and have existed in various sections of the globe in rural communities not under urban influence. Hence it seems reasonable to think that at least some of the elements associated with the Saturnalia of the classical period were a part of the original celebration. At this early meal the people would believe that the deity, although unseen, was present to receive his share in the form of a sacrifice burned on an altar; further, that through this feast they held communion with the god in the hope of obtaining his blessing.

5. The Sacred Meals of the Fratres Arvales

For three days in May⁶ there was held by the Fratres Arvales the festival in honor of Dea Dia. On the first⁷ the brethren met at dawn either at the home of the magister or of some one who was a member of the college or in Palatio in divorum where the first offering was made to the goddess in the form of wine and incense, and the fruges ar(idae) et vir(ides) and panes laureati were consecrated by the brethren; et in ca[th]le [dri] consederunt.⁸ Although there is no direct reference to a meal here, these ceremonies seem to have been a preliminary part of the feast which took place on the afternoon of that day.⁹ On that occasion the

¹Brand Popular Antiquities 2. pp. 20-32; Frazer Golden Bough 9. 134, 137, 152, 225-26.

²Frazer Golden Bough 9. 136.

³Brand Popular Antiquities 2. 17, 22, 25, 26.

⁴Lucian Sat. 2; Brand Popular Antiquities 2. pp. 18, 23; Frazer Golden Bough 7. 75, 151.

⁵Brand Popular Antiquities 2. 20-33; Frazer Golden Bough 7. 147, 150 ff., 152.

⁶Cf. Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 562.

⁷C. I. L. 6. p. 575.

⁸Acta Fratrum Arvalium 241, Henzen, p. 12.

⁹Acta Fratrum Arvalium 218, Henzen, p. 12.

washing of hands and the offering of incense and wine mark the meal as sacred. In addition to this there was a sacrifice on the altar. What this was is an unsettled question,¹ but some of the fruges libatae consecrated in the morning might have been included. In the course of the rite Dea Dia received her share of the food after the worshippers had eaten the principal part of the meal. If the early morning ritual was in truth a part of the ceremony connected with the feast, the whole corresponded to the common practice of a Roman household where an offering was made early in the morning and another just before the *mensa secunda*.² The participants were the fratres Arvales, who reclined during the meal, and pueri praetextati patrimi et matrimi senatorum filii, who sat in chairs. Marquardt³ calls attention to the fact that the sacerdotes Augusti are not mentioned in the records until the time of Elagabal. The food which they ate is not named in detail. The fruits which had been consecrated might have formed a part; wine was probably used; and pulmenta and bellaria are mentioned as being carried away in napkins. In the earlier period the conception must have been that of communion with the deity of agriculture. In the time of the empire, since the clause deam unguentavit is used, the goddess was present in the form of her image but in prehistoric days the deity would not have been visible.

After an interval of a day occurred the most important meals of the series. Apparently quite early two porcae piaculares were sacrificed as a preliminary to the offering of the vacca honoraria to Dea Dia on what seems to have been a portable altar.⁴

¹Birt, in Roscher, *Lex. I*¹, 971; Henzen *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* p. 15; Marquardt *Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer* 6. 453.

²Suet. *Otho* 6; cf. Marquardt *Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer* 6. 126; for a discussion of the rites of the private home see p.

³*Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer* 6. 453, n. 4.

⁴See *Acta Fratrum Arvalium* Henzen p. 22 f.

Then followed the examination of the exta, as Marquardt¹ says, but Henzen² thinks that the returning of the exta to the altar means merely that cooking took place and perhaps he is right. Be that as it may, the exta of the porcae were returned to the altar and those of the vaccina to the foculus argenteus cespiti ornatus in the circus. Thus within her sacred precinct the goddess received her portion of the meal by its being burnt on an altar and, since no statue is mentioned, one might not have been present in imperial times. The human participants in this meal, the Arval brothers, before midday assembled in tetrastylo, subsellis consederunt and ate the flesh of the porcae piaculares along with the blood. Although among many peoples the placular sacrifice was usually wholly burnt on an altar,³ this was not true in the practice of the Romans; and here the conception seems to have been that a sin offering was made and that by eating of the consecrated flesh they entered into communion with the deity who they hoped would as a result be propitious.

Then followed the most important sacrifice⁴ when wearing the toga praetexta and crowned with wreaths of corn-ears the Fratres went to the grove, where the magister sacrificed the agna opima and hostiae litationem inspexerunt). After this all offered incense and wine.⁵ Next was the placing of the thesauri on the altar which was foras and this was followed by the flamen and promagister offering wine and incense before the door of the temple. The after the passing of the fruges from hand to hand came

¹Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer 6. 455, n. 2.

²Acta Fratrum Arvalium p. 23.

³Fowler, Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 172.

⁴For the text describing the whole ceremony see Henzen, Acta Fratrum Arvalium 218 p. 26 f.

⁵Cf. Festus, ed. Lindsay, p. 157; Macrobius 3, 11; Plin. N. H. 35, 158; Henzen Acta Fratrum Arvalium p. 29 f.; Marquardt Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer 6. 456.

the most puzzling part of the ritual connected with the meal: deinde in aedem intraverunt) et ollas precati sunt, et osteis apertis per clivum iactaverunt, deinde subsellis marmoreis con-
sed(erunt) et panes laureat(os) per public(os) partiti sunt. When all had gone out of the temple they left the grove to attend the feast in the tetrastyle.¹

Although there is a complexity of action and of offerings, as well as means of offering, all seem to be in honor of one deity, Dea Dia, in spite of the fact that the hymn of the brethren was addressed to Mars and the Lares. Wissowa,² however, is no doubt right in thinking that the meals were originally in honor of Mars. This transfer of worship from one deity to another is not very strange when one considers the fact that much of the hymn itself was not entirely clear at the time of the revival of the ceremony by Augustus. The goddess' portion of the agna opima seems to have been given to her by burning upon an altar and it is reasonable to think that at least some of the wine was offered in this way also, for it is mentioned in connection with incense. What was placed for her in the aedem in mensa...ollis is not known--perhaps it included milk, as Henzen suggests, or a portion of the fruges. Either or both would have been in full accord with early forms of bloodless offerings. For the portion offered within the temple the statue of the deity, since the words deas unguentaverunt³ are used, must have been present but for that offered outside there was, perhaps, no visible form. In the earlier period when Mars and the Lares were the gods honored this must have been the case.

In the preliminary rites the participants seem to have

¹Acta Fratrum Arvalium 218, 219, Henzen, p. 27.

²Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 143.

³Acta Fratrum Arvalium 241, Henzen, p. 12.

been not only the Arval brethren and their officers but also a number of spectators who probably shared the sacred food and believed they entered into communion with the deity to receive her blessing. What constituted the meal of the brethren is not definitely stated but since the offerings to the goddess included the agna opima, wine, and perhaps fruges, it seems that these would form the principal part. The attitude here, as in the previous meals of the ritual, seems to have been that of communion in order to secure the assistance and blessing of the divinity.

Then after the ludi circenses¹ the Fratres returned to Rome for another meal² in the house of the magister or his representative. Here the deity received wine and incense with perhaps an additional sacrifice of some kind as the words ture et vino fecerunt are followed by the expression ministrantibus pueris.... sacrificio peracto. The goddess was probably present in visible form since the statue is mentioned in connection with the meal in the home in Rome on the first day.³ The worshippers were again the Fratres Arvales and the pueri patrimi et matrimi, who perhaps had the idea of seeking blessing by communion. But I doubt whether even in the early empire, much less the later, this last meal of a day of ritualistic festivity was much more than a mere form.

On the third day the Arvales met in Rome⁴ and ibi inter oenam illi ture vino fecerunt;⁵ hence the goddess, as formerly, probably received her share of the food before the secunda mensa. The boys assisted in the presentation of the fruges which had been

¹Acta Fratrum Arvalium 87, 89, 90, 91, Henzen, p. 36.

²Acta Fratrum Arvalium 218, Henzen, p. 39.

³Acta Fratrum Arvalium 241, Henzen, p. 12.

⁴Acta Fratrum Arvalium 105, Henzen, p. 41.

⁵Acta Fratrum Arvalium [118, 120, 122, 155; Ant. A., 183, 186, Comm. A.] 213, [218], Henzen p. 42.

consecrated on the first day¹ and which Dea Dia thus received at this last meal by their being burnt on an altar; in addition there was the incense and the wine. Since there is a reference to the statue in connection with the rites of the meal of the first day,² it seems that--although it is not mentioned--it would also be present on the third day.

The participants were the same as on the first day and lampadibus incensis tuscanicas contigerunt, quas per calatores domibus suis miserunt.³ Birt⁴ asks, mit Inhalt? Perhaps there was some content of consecrated food, but one cannot help wondering whether this act of the rite of the third day was in any way connected with the use of the ollae on the second. These ollae were of baked clay and formed a part of the most ancient rite of the Arval brethren.⁵ As we have noted, upon entering the temple in mensa sacrum fecerunt ollis and shortly in aedem intraverunt et ollas precati sunt, after which the ollae were thrown through the open door of the temple. Since in a very marked degree the emphasis of ritual characterizes the whole history of the growth of Roman religion, is it not possible that the ollae were used in early Roman worship as utensils in the festival but later along with the words of the song itself held sacred and used in a merely formal sense?⁶ The similarity of time, place, and ceremony has led some scholars to believe this rite identical with the Ambar-

¹Birt (Roscher Lex. I¹ 974) calls attention to the fact that the bread which had been consecrated is not mentioned because it was eaten on the second day.

²Acta Fratrum Arvalium 241, Henzen, p. 12.

³Acta Fratrum Arvalium 87, Henzen, p. 43.

⁴Roscher Lex. I¹ 974.

⁵Henzen, op. cit. pp. 26 and 27.

⁶Rivers The Todas p. 453; cf. Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 489; Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 563, n. 1; R. Engelmann, Berl. Philol. Wochenschr. 1908, 861 f.; Eitrem Hermes und die Toten p. 57, n. 1.

valia.¹ When one adds to this the facts that Mars, an old agricultural deity,² and the Lares are mentioned in the hymn, and that the fruges held from the beginning to the end of the festival a prominent place in the ceremony, he cannot escape the conclusion that the whole festival must have been an old agricultural rite which, though probably complicated and amplified at its revival by Augustus, still retained its simpler elements. Exactly what these were cannot be determined, but it seems that the sacrifice of grain and perhaps also of wine would have been the central ritual. At the beginning the meals must have been much more frugal and in all probability the duration of the festival was only one day. In the early period, too, when earnest Italians, meeting the difficulties and hardships of a primitive civilization, sought communion with the deities who would protect the crops and the farm life in general, the atmosphere must have been quite different from that of the time of the empire. For the motivating influence in the ceremony as revived by Augustus was the sacrifice in the interest of the imperial family, a worship which was neither Roman nor Italian in its origin.³

¹Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 143; Fowler Roman Festivals p. 124 ff.

²Fowler Roman Festivals pp. 34-35, 40-41, 48 f., 126 f.

³Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 437.

IV MEALS IN HONOR OF INVISIBLE DEITIES

By far the most common meal in the older Roman religion was that in which the deity received his share of the food through burnt sacrifice or libation but was invisible to the worshipper, who ate that which had been consecrated by its being shared with the divinity or by being in contact with the altar or object in which he resided.

1. The Sacred Meal of the Parilia

One of the oldest of these was the sacred meal of the Parilia, which occurred on April 17¹ and was an occasion of rustic joyousness. The most important offering was the libo de milo² in which the goddess took especial delight,³ but a basket of millet and a libation of milk were also used. Ovid's⁴ description and the words operata deo pubes used by Tibullus⁵ indicate that the offering was made to the deity before the meal was eaten by the people. But the manner in which the offering was made is not entirely clear for Probus⁶ says lactem libant while Tibullus⁷ speaks of sprinkling the image, a process which may sometimes have taken place later when a wooden image was at hand while earlier

¹C. I. L. 1 p. 391.

²There seems to be no question that Pales was closely connected with shepherd life but sometimes the reference is to a god and sometimes to a goddess: for example, Ov. (Fast. 4. 744), Festus (ed. Lindsay, p. 222) Vergil (Georg. 3. 1, 294), Tibullus (1. 1, 36), the author of the Culex (20), and Probus (ad Verg. Georg. 3. 1) indicate that the deity is a goddess; but Varro (Serv. ad Verg. Georg. 31), Arnobius (Adv. Nat. 3. 40), and Martianus Capella (1. 50), a god. Ov. Fast. 743-46; 775-76.

³Ov. Fast. 4. 743-46.

⁴Ov. Fast. 4. 777-80.

⁵2. 5. 95.

⁶Ad Verg. Georg. 3. 1.

⁷1. 1, 36; 2. 5, 28.

there was a simple libation of milk.¹ The method of presenting the cake and the basket of millet are even more obscure. Frazer,² who bases his conjecture upon Ovid's use of the words dapibus resectis³ and a description in Thomas Pennant's account⁴ of what he saw in the islands of Scotland thinks that the Italian shepherd might have broken the cake and thrown it over his shoulder as an offering to Pales. The close resemblance of the description of Tibullus⁵ to the Scottish meal is easily seen. In both were the abundance of liquor, the libation, the cake, the absence of animal sacrifice, and even the cutting of the turf--all on the day of the Celtic Parilia. Frazer's conjecture may be right and it is certainly not more closely related to magic than the use of the beans on the Lemuria.⁶ Both are rites of lustration. But this method of sacrificing the cake does not seem to accord with that used by the Italians in other festivals and one would not expect to find it upon an occasion so joyial in character as the Parilia. Furthermore, in the lines preceding that in which he names the offerings Ovid speaks of the sacred fire and uses the term focis; Tibullus⁷ also mentions the laurel crackling in the flame only a few words before the phrase operata deo pubes. Now since the Italians usually burned the cereal sacrifice, as in the Terminalia,⁸ it is natural to think that the cake was cast into the sacred flame. The millet from the basket might also have been presented in this way.

The food of the feast of the people was bountiful, rich,

¹Powler Roman Festivals p. 81.

²The Fasti of Ovid 3. 349 ff.

³Ov. Fast. 4. 745.

⁴"A tour in Scotland, 1769", in J. Pinkerton's General Collection of Voyages and Travels 3. 49.

⁵2. 5, 95-102.

⁶Ov. Fast. 5. 429-444.

⁷2. 5, 81.

⁸Ov. Fast. 2. 645-53.

and accompanied by the drinking of much wine and by indulgence in excessive merriment and even boisterousness.¹ Since no animal food is mentioned the worshippers probably ate the same type of pastoral and agricultural products as were offered to the goddess and, as a part was given to her, the whole was consecrated. Ovid apparently thinks of the meal as such for he² says that the hands should be washed in living dew--an effective means of purification³--before the lac and the sapa were mixed and drunk. This, added to the prayer made before the people ate,⁴ indicates communion with a deity who was present to receive a share of the food and to hear and answer the requests of those who worshipped her.

There is no definite proof that the urban rite of the Parilia involved a feast, but Propertius⁵ brackets his lusus in urbe by references to the banquet of the shepherds and the richly laden country platters. Furthermore, Probus⁶ connects the libation of milk, a prominent part of the preliminary acts of the rustic meal, with the inhabitants of the city. Although the ceremony in the city had some additional elements⁷ there can be no doubt that the purpose of the two phases of the festival were the same; moreover, the rituals of the leaping through fire and of the using of water were identical.⁸ Hence one is inclined to think that the meal was not omitted from the urban celebration although the manner of serving it might have been somewhat altered.

The elements of the rural feast of the Parilia, as well as its primary points of interest, namely the sheep and the shep-

73 ff. ¹In addition to the other references see Propert. 4. 4,

²Fast. 4. 778-89.

³Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 3. 367 f.

⁴Ov. Fast. 4. 747-76.

⁵4. 4, 75-76.

⁶Ad Verg. Georg. 3. 1.

⁷Ov. Fast. 4. 725-34.

⁸Cf. Dionys. 1. 88; Ov. Fast. 4. 725-28; 735-42; 781-82; Prop. 4. 4, 77-78.

herds, show that it reached back to the pastoral stage of Italian civilization and was the means of fulfilling one phase of the festival, that of protection, for it served as a means of communion with the deity and strengthened the likelihood of an answer to the prayer for preservation of both flocks and shepherds from all evil as they left the winter's fold to seek the summer's pasturage.

2. The Feast at the Boundary Stone

At the boundary stone where adjoining farms met was held on February 23¹ of each year a feast in honor of Terminus.² A bloodless sacrifice of fruges--which were probably cereals--cut honey-combs, and wine were burned on an altar.³ But regarding the second part of the god's portion Ovid⁴ says:

spargitur et caeso communis Terminus agno
nec queritur, lactans cum sibi porca datur.

Here no burning is mentioned although the Roman of classical times would in all probability take for granted that the parts allocated to the gods would be disposed of in this way;⁵ but the rite which was not in his day regularly performed--namely, the smearing of the blood on the stump or the stone⁶ in which the deity was incarnated--is especially mentioned. The food which was burned on the altar the people probably believed to be transformed into an ethereal substance more suitable for a deity, but the blood which was commonly sprinkled upon the object used in fetichistic ritual seemed to involve a renewal of the bond of kinship between the god represented and the worshippers, or per-

¹Ov. Fast. 2. 639; C. I. L. I² pp. 212, 223, 310.

²Ov. Fast. 2. 657-58.

³Ov. Fast. 2. 645-54.

⁴Ov. Fast. 2. 655-56.

⁵Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People pp. 179-181.

⁶This occurred only at termini sacrificales. Grom. Lat. 1. pp. 43, 73, 127, 221, 227, 401.

haps earlier it was believed that the liquid as it disappeared was drunk by the deity.¹ Frazer² says that the sacrifice was no doubt intended to strengthen the divine stone or its indwelling divinity for his task of maintaining the boundary. At any rate the worshipper of classical times seems to have thought that the god honored was present in the stone, shared in the festivity of friendship and good will, and would therefore more readily answer his prayer for peace and the preservation of boundary lines.

Dionysius³ says that the food was bloodless and in part Plutarch⁴ agrees with him; elsewhere,⁵ however, he says that in ancient times the sacrifice was bloodless but that in his day living things were used. Horace⁶ also mentions the sacrifice of a lamb on the Terminalia. Frazer⁷ thinks the celebration a renewal of the rites performed at the setting of the stone and doubts whether the offering was ever bloodless for Siculus Flaccus⁸ in describing the first ceremony says that an animal was used. This opinion may be correct, but is it not possible that the earliest boundary stones were placed before animal sacrifices were common and that the bloodless offering was a survival of that age while the animal sacrifice was a later addition to the ceremony? The account of Siculus Flaccus was in all probability not based upon the prehistoric period and, even if it were, an animal might well have been used in the first consecration but not in the annual rites.

The principal article of food used by the neighbors was

¹Smith Religion of the Semites pp. 207 and 212 ff.

²The Fasti of Ovid 2. 483.

³2. 74.

⁴Quaest. Rom. 15.

⁵Numa 16. 1.

⁶Epod. 2. 59-60.

⁷The Fasti of Ovid 2. 482 ff.

⁸Grom. Lat. 1. p. 14.

without question the flesh of the animal whose blood was sprinkled on the stone, and by eating the sacrifice in the presence of the deity to whom it was made they entered into communion with him. Although the prayer which Ovid gives is not in rustic terms, it conveys to us the fervent desire that friendship and peace be preserved. Moreover in the rite performed by the individual family¹ all members were represented in the preparation of the meal. Therefore each was directly responsible to the god for the pledge of loyalty; but since the neighbors assembled for the feast itself,² in the earlier period especially, the obligation of one household to the other would be keenly felt in the sharing of the consecrated food. The importance of the purpose of the pledge is self-evident, particularly in a new community where the boundary lines were uncertain and were easily disputed. This condition no doubt existed at the time the festival was founded.³ What was true of individuals would be true also of districts or tribal territories; hence it is quite probable that the festival mentioned by Ovid⁴ as taking place on the Via Laurentia was originally the ceremony conducted on the boundary of the ager Romanus.⁵ Since the offering mentioned consisted only of the fibrae of the sheep, it seems logical to think that as the families partook of the consecrated flesh in the private, the officials of the territories concerned partook of it in the public rite.

3. The Rural Meal in Honor of Mars Silvanus

The rural meal in honor of Mars Silvanus was held during

¹Ov. Fast. 2. 643-44. Cf. Frazer, The Fasti of Ovid 2. 489, on Grom. Lat. 1. p. 302 ff. See also Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 167.

²Ov. Fast. 2. 657.

³Added to the fact that a religious ceremony was held at the boundary stone is Dionysius' statement (2. 74).

⁴Fast. 2. 679-682.

⁵Cf. Fowler Roman Festivals p. 327; and Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 486.

the daytime each year in the woods of Italy.¹ Wissowa² translates the Marti Silvano of Cato³ as dem Mars und dem Silvanus; but Fowler⁴ seems to be more in accord with the religious conceptions of the early Italians in accepting Mars Silvanus as a cult title of a divinity from whom the later Silvanus might have been an offshoot and whose various forms show that he was not a distinctly defined god but merely a semi-deity. In honor of this being, then, the propitiatory meal seems to have been held. That the offering was of wine and of cakes of certain ingredients is quite clear but the manner of presentation is not entirely so. Cato⁵ merely says ubi res divina facta erit, which in all probability means that the food was burned on an altar. Plautus⁶ in this sense uses the words ego rem divinam intus faciam and there are many similar cases.⁷ In addition to this we know that in the woods there were roughly constructed altars of Silvanus.⁸ It was probably on one of these that the sacrifice took place before the rustic men ate, for in Cato the words ubi res divina are followed immediately by statim ibidem consumito. The latter specification, as is shown in the discussion of the meal propter viam, was in all probability due to the fact that the food was entirely too sacred to be touched by anyone who was not ritually pure. Either a male slave or a freeman might perform the rite but women were not allowed to attend an ritual in honor of Silvanus.⁹ The purpose of the feast Cato states clearly: pro bubus ut valeant.

¹Cato R. R. 83.

²Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 214; cf. 145, A. 6.

³R. R. 83.

⁴Religious Experience of the Roman People pp. 132, 81, 76, and 89 n. 39.

⁵R. R. 83.

⁶Amphit. 966.

⁷Cf. Cic. N. D. 3. 18, 47; Div. 2. 10, 25; Plaut. Epid. 316; 415; Ter. Eun. 513; Hec. 184; etc.

⁸Mart. 10. 92, 5-6.

⁹C. I. L. 6. 579.

Furthermore, the ceremony took place in the glades where the cattle fed in the summer and where dwelt this woodland spirit--hardly a real divinity but a brownie-like being who might either injure or protect the live stock. For this reason, although Cato in his day said si voles, one suspects that the superstitious inhabitant of a newly settled territory would choose to perform the rite rather than to risk the loss of his property and would believe that through the meal he was entering into communion with Mars Silvanus to obtain this benefit.

4. The Meal in Honor of Ceres

Before the harvest there was in honor of Ceres a sacred meal mentioned by several authors¹ but Cato² gives the most explicit instructions. According to his account first wine and incense seem to have been offered to Janus, Jove and Juno, and then to Janus strues, which Festus³ says are genera liborum. Jupiter was honored next with an offering cake, fertum, and this seems to have been followed by an offering of wine made to Janus and Jupiter in turn. After this came the sacrifice of the porca praecidanea. Then when the sacrificial parts were cut off there was another offering of strues, fertum and wine to Janus and to Jove respectively. Finally the exta and wine were offered to Ceres. It seems, since no unusual method of making the offering of food is mentioned, that the exta were offered on an altar and the wine poured in libation.

The human participants were evidently the familia of the farmer's household, but there is little direct information regard-

¹Paulus, ed. Lindsay, p. 223; Gellius 4. 6, 8; Nonius, ed. Quicherat, p. 163.

²R. R. 134.

³Ed. Lindsay, p. 310.

ing details. Paulus¹ merely says that the sacrifice of the porca was made priusquam novas fruges gustarent, and Cato² does not say specifically that the worshippers ate but he does show that only the exta of the animal were offered to the deity. When one considers that this is a rustic rite, which would in the earliest period of Italian agriculture have been performed by the pater familias, it seems reasonable to think that the flesh, along with the novae fruges, was eaten by the members of the group.³ Just how old the animal sacrifice in this rite is we do not know. Ovid⁴ says that the veteres offered far but we should remember that originally the rite of the porca praecidanea was piacular. It was for the benefit of those who had neglected their duty to the dead and in all probability was more closely connected with Tellus than with Ceres.⁵ The relation to the latter may have been established only after she had to a large extent absorbed Tellus. This would account for a blood sacrifice to Ceres at a relatively early date, even if the offerings usually made to her were, as Ovid says, bloodless. The extreme in development as activities and interests became more urban is revealed in Festus⁶ reference to the substitutional offering in the form of gold and silver figures. Hence the sacrifice to Ceres was no more a simple formal tasting of first fruits or, as somewhat later, a rustic meal of which the porca formed the principal part, but a substitutional offering.⁷

¹Ed. Lindsay, p. 223.

²R. R. 134.

³See Frazer Golden Bough 8. 6 f.; 48 ff.; Smith Religion of the Semites p. 222 f.; Jevons Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion p. 183 ff.

⁴Fast. 2. 519-20.

⁵Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 121.

⁶Ed. Lindsay, p. 238.

⁷In the Acta Fratrum Arvalium, however, the sacrifice of the porca is mentioned as late as the time of Severus Alexander. C. I. L. 6¹, p. 575; Henzen Acta Fratrum Arvalium p. 135.

5. The Meal in Honor of Bona Dea

The meal in honor of Bona Dea was celebrated at Rome in ea domo, quae est imperio¹ at the beginning of December.² Both Macrobius³ and Juvenal⁴ testify to the fact that a pig was sacrificed. The latter also mentions a huge bowl of wine and, although his description is a burlesque,⁵ gives proof of actual consumption of food and drink. Reference is also made to a lectisternium.⁶ Very little is actually known regarding the rites connected with the meal, especially in the earlier period. But since Juvenal says abdomine porcae⁷ and nothing further is given concerning the form of the sacrifice, it is reasonable to suppose that the invisible deity received her share of the victim through the parts burned on the altar.⁸ The references to the lectisternium, however, imply that after the cult had been changed by Greek influence the statue of the goddess was placed at the table. This double ritual in the description of the late author is probably due to the fact that among early Italian peoples Bona Dea seems to have been a divinity corresponding to the Earth Goddess found in many primitive civilizations. When the distinctly anthropomorphic conception of the imported Greek religion was attached to the old rite, both types persisted.

The wine was probably poured out in libation to Bona Dea but, as Macrobius⁹ says, it was called milk and the wine jar a mellarium. Since milk and honey were used in the oldest Italian

¹Plut. Caes. 9; Cic. Har. Resp. 37

²Plut. Cic. 19; Cass. Dio 37. 35. Cf. Cic. ad Att. 5. 21, 14; 6. 1. 26; 15. 25.

³1. 12, 23.

⁴2. 86-87.

⁵Juv. 2. 112-13; 2. 95. See also 6. 315.

⁶Cic. Har. Resp. 5, 8; de Domo 53. 136; see also Pison. 39. 95; Mil. 27. 72.

⁷2. 86-87.

⁸Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 179 ff.

⁹1. 12, 25; Plut. R. Q. 20.

cults,¹ Peter² is probably right in thinking that the explanation lies in the fact that these were originally used. In that case there must be three distinct stages of development marked in this cult.--the very earliest, when bloodless sacrifice was the only common type; the second, when there was an offering of the pig and the wine after animal sacrifice had become prevalent and the vine was under cultivation;³ and the third, when the Greeks had introduced the lectisternium.

Although the worshippers were women only, the noblest matrons of Rome and the Vestal Virgins,⁴ the meal was a survival from the time when the wife of the chief of the community, her daughters, and the other matrons sacrificed a pig to the deity of fertility. In the earliest times if there was a meal it must have been of the simple type found in the sacra of the curiae⁵ and the belief that the goddess, invisible but present, drank the liquid poured out in her honor⁶ was probably prevalent. The introduction of the porcae and the wine would mark a step away from this simplicity, but still as the women ate and drank in moderation they shared the consecrated food with the divinity. Even in Cicero's time, after the introduction of the lectisternium, the worship must have been quite decorous and the conviction that communion with the deity took place genuine or the sacrilege of Clodius⁷ would not have created such a sensation. But by Jevenal's day the old Roman sense of decency and propriety must have been lost, for he describes the rite as one of the licentious, wild orgies char-

¹Cic. de Div. 1. 11, 18; Ov. Fast. 2. 652.

²Roscher Lex. I¹ 790. Cf. Lobeck Aglaophamus p. 879.

³W. Helbig Die Italiker in der Poebene p. 71.

⁴Macro. 1. 12, 28; C. I. L. 6. 2236 f.; Cic. de Har.

Resp. 37.

⁵Dionys. 2. 23.

⁶Smith Religion of the Semites pp. 207 and 212 ff.

⁷Cic. de Har. Resp. 5. 8.

acteristic of the religions which had come from the East. The frenzied, drunken revelry, which he¹ designates as nota bonae secreta doae, is in strong contrast with the terms mysteria,² occultum,³ and opertum.⁴ Perhaps Juvenal, however, has somewhat overdrawn the picture both here and in the second satire. But even so, if there was any real religious conception in this later period, it was certainly not that of chaste women sharing a meal with the Earth Goddess in order that the blessing of fertility might abound in the community. The importance of the original Italic cult in the lives of a primitive people is attested by the fact that such a worship of a kindly earth-mother who was protectress of women and patroness of fertility in both plant and animal life is world-wide.

6. The Drinking of the Must

That the drinking of the must accompanied by the words vetus novum vinum, veteri novo morbo medeor was for the benefit of health seems clear.⁵ But the deity in whose honor it was done was probably not the Meditritna whose name Festus⁶ says came from the words of the formula but rather Jupiter⁷ in whose honor were the Vinalia of both April and August.⁸ Then, as Wissowa⁹ says, Meditritna might not have existed except in the minds of the grammarians.

Varro¹⁰ says that the old and the new wine were poured out in libation; hence in this manner the god shared the drinking.

¹Is. 314.

²Juv. 6. 314.

³Cic. ad Att. 5. 21, 14; 6. 1, 26.

⁴Cic. Har. Resp. 37.

⁵Festus, ed. Lindsay, p. 123; Varro L. L. 6. 21.

⁶Ed. Lindsay, p. 123.

⁷C. I. L. I² p. 214 and p. 245.

⁸Cf. Mommsen C. I. L. I² 332.

⁹Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 155.

¹⁰L. L. 6. 21.

The attitude of the people, however, is puzzling. The use of the formula quoted from Festus suggests magic and Varro does not give the name of the deity, although the former uses the term sacra and the latter, libare. Therefore it seems that both recognized the rite as religious. Plutarch¹ gives the impression that it seemed strange to the Greeks that unfermented wine did not produce intoxication, and it might have been this same puzzled attitude which led the Italians to the use of the mustum as a drink to ward off disease. Moreover, in the same passage he says that at the Pithoegia a libation of new wine was made before the people tasted it and prayed that it would be health-giving.² Although the occasion and the time were different from those of the Meditrinalia, the Romans no doubt knew of the drinking and the prayer which accompanied it and, as magic was never encouraged among them, assigned the rite to the honor of Jupiter, who in Italy was the god of wine festivals as Dionysus was in Greece. Because the very earliest ritual might have been one of magic, it is very doubtful whether the sanctity attached to first fruits³ was ever prominent. But it is possible that the Italians of historical times thought the god was present to receive the libation and that by drinking the health-producing mustum in his presence they entered into communion with him. Perhaps they believed also that during the following year they would be at least comparatively free from disease.

7. The Sacred Meals of the Liberalia

With regard to the eating of sacred food on the Liberalia--

¹Quaest. Conv. 3. 7, 1.

²Dr. Helena Gayer informs me that in central Europe the modern practice of drinking for the sake of health the unfermented juice of the grape at the vintage season in such fashionable resorts as Locarno is somewhat similar to the rite of the Meditrinalia. Even the name, Traubenkur, is suggestive.

³Cf. Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 426.

March 17--it is almost impossible to draw any really definite conclusions. Old women, priestesses of Liber, sat along the streets and sacrificed on portable hearths a part of the cakes bought by the worshippers.¹ This implies that the remainder was eaten by the purchaser. Ovid² names Bacchus as the deity honored and we know from other sources that Bacchus (Dionysus) and Liber had long since been identified. But the simple cake of meal and honey reminds one not of the rites of the Greek god of wine but rather of the early Italian agricultural rites, such as those of the Parilia, in which bloodless offerings were used. Furthermore, there is reason for thinking that Liber was an old agricultural deity, for Augustine³ says that the rites of this god, who presided over the fertility of men and women, were celebrated with shameful license and with the use of repelling images in order that crops might be good and fields free from witchcraft.⁴

Tertullian⁵ says non in publico Liberalibus discumbo, and perhaps the meal he thus suggests was connected with the assumption of the toga virilis, which took place on this date. As a part of this ceremony it seems that a sacrifice was offered on the Capitoline Hill⁶ but the deity to whom it was made is a matter of dispute. Iuventus,⁷ Liber,⁸ and Juppiter⁹ seem to have been involved. Rossbach¹⁰ thinks that the assumption of the toga virilis

¹Varro L. L. 6. 14; Ov. Fast. 3. 733-36.

²Ov. Fast. 3. 725 ff.

³C. D. 6. 9; 7. 21.

⁴See Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 3. 132 f. Cr. Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 299.

⁵Apol. 42.

⁶Tertull. de Idol. 16; Appian de Bell. Civ. 4. 30; cf. Marquardt Handbuch der Römischen Alterthümer 7¹ 126; Fowler Roman Festivals p. 56.

⁷Dionys. 4. 15.

⁸Ov. Fast. 3, 771 ff.

⁹Serv. ad Verg. Ecl. 4. 50.

¹⁰Römische Ehe p. 407 ff.

took place at puberty in honor of the Italian Liber because as a god of fertility he would promote the full development of the young man's physical life and hence his function in society. Perhaps in the beginning Liber or Liber and Iuventus were the only deities concerned and that the connection with Jupiter came later through association with the Capitol. But whoever the god may have been, is it not in keeping with what we know of other Italian festivals to think that the relatives and friends of the youth partook of a sacred meal in which the deity was a participant because he received a share of the victim on the altar? Then in the eating of the consecrated flesh the people would enter into communion with the god in the hope that he would protect the young man and foster all his interests. The belief that such a feast took place is in keeping with the findings of the anthropologists. Somerville¹ says that there occurred in the islands of the New Hebrides a very similar ceremony in which youths upon reaching the age of puberty donned a belt.² One is forced to admit the possibility of other interpretations and to admit that the Agonium Martiale, which also occurred on this day, might have been connected with these young men who were now for the first time ready for military service.³

8. The Feast beneath the Fig Tree

On July 7⁴ in Latium⁵ was held beneath the branches of the wild fig tree a feast in honor of Juno Caprotina.⁶ In it the lac

¹The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland 23. 5.

²Cf. Fowler Roman Festivals p. 54; Wissowa in Roscher Lex. 22 2023; Schur in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, Real Encyc. 13. 81.

³See also Jevons Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion p. 178 f.; Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics s. v. Puberty.

⁴C. I. L. 4. 1555; Varro L. L. 6, 18.

⁵Varro L. L. 6, 18.

⁶Plut. Cam. 33; Varro L. L. 6, 18.

quod ex caprifico manat seems to have been used for the libation instead of milk¹ but no data are available as to what animal was sacrificed, if there was one. Yet the words sacrificium and sacrificantur² are used. Plutarch³ shows that the women ate beneath the fig tree what was evidently a sacred meal. In the minds of the ancients the goat was associated with the festival, and in modern tribes at a somewhat low stage of civilization this animal is often used in connection with the fig tree in a rite similar to this.⁴ Both free and slave women⁵ participated in the meal, which in all probability was of whatever the sacrifice consisted. And, in spite of some Roman traditions,⁶ the fact that it was under a wild fig tree was very significant both with regard to the attitude of the worshippers and the purpose of the meal,⁷ for the tree in early times was closely associated with the fertility of women. This was perhaps originally on the basis of sympathetic magic, due to the manner of the fertilization of the cultivated species of the fig.⁸ Not only was the sap of the caprificus used but branches were cut from it with which, perhaps, the women struck one another, just as the Luperci struck with strips of goat-hide the women who threw themselves in their way in the rite of the Lupercalia.⁹ Frazer¹⁰ is inclined to connect the tradition of the disappearance of Romulus in the goat marsh¹¹

¹Macrob. 1. 11, 40; Fowler Roman Festivals p. 179.

²Macrob. 1. 11, 40; Varro L. L. 6, 18.

³Cam. 33.

⁴See Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 347.

⁵Macrob. 1. 11, 36.

⁶Macrob. 1. 11, 36-40; Plut. Cam. 33.

⁷Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 184 ff.; Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 343 ff.

⁸Palladius R. R. 4. 10, 28; Pliny N. H. 15. 79-81; 16. 114; 17. 256. Cf. Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 344.

⁹Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 2. 331 ff.; p. 343; Fowler Roman Festivals 178-79; Varro L. L. 6. 18.

¹⁰Golden Bough 2. 313; 4. 14.

¹¹Liv. 1. 16; Plut. Rom. 27.

on this very day with the fact that among some peoples kings have been killed as gods when they became weakened, lest the vigor of the growing grain should become less. He adds that the slaves' donning the mistresses' robes and taking unusual liberties¹ was a feature similar to the Saturnalian freedom, which has been interpreted as related to fertility. Although these theories may not be correct, it seems that the women believed that on this day they entered into communion with the deity and thus increased their own powers of reproduction. The frequency of this type of festival in primitive civilizations and the antiquity of the record² indicate that this was an Italic rite closely associated with the life of the rural community.

9. The Feast of the Faunalia

In the rural districts of Italy on December 5³ was celebrated a feast which Horace and his commentators alone mention, the Faunalia. It seems that there was first an invocation to the deity, attended by the offering of a kid, wine, and incense.⁴ The sheep and cattle wandered freely through the fields while the people were in typical holiday mood. Although there is no direct reference to a meal the very fact that the haedus was offered on an altar and no further description is given implies that the usual practice was followed,⁵ namely, that the exta were placed on the altar but the remainder of the animal was eaten by those who participated in the ceremony. Moreover, the holiday activities which Horace describes were of the nature which often accompanied

¹Auson. de fer. 9 p. 104 Reip.; Plut. Cam. 33.

²Wissowa, Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll, 3. 1551. See C. I. L. 4. 1555; Varro L. L. 6. 18; Mommsen C. I. L. 1² p. 321.

³Hor. Od. 3. 18, 10. See also Probus ad Verg. Georg. 1. 10.

⁴Hor. Od. 3. 18, 5-8; Acron ad Hor. Od. 3. 18, 7.

⁵Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People pp. 179-181.

similar rural festivals in which the worshippers partook of the flesh.¹ Therefore I am inclined to think there was a meal in which the people ate the kid and drank the wine, believing that Faunus, unseen though he was, was in their midst.² Yet the prayer in the first four lines of the poem indicates that this god was not always so favorable and might do some harm. For this reason it was especially important that the right relations be maintained with him. That it is one of the early Italian festivities is signified by the nature of the god Faunus. Although later identified with the Greek god Pan,³ he is here a supernatural being not yet fully god, capable of playing pranks and doing harm, but also of doing good if properly propitiated.⁴ Hence in the meal which seems to have taken place the rustics probably believed that by eating the consecrated food they held communion with him who through jovial companionship was coaxed into granting his blessing.

10. The Feast of the Luperci

On February 15⁵ in connection with the ceremony of the Lupercalia occurred one of the oldest Roman rituals.⁶ In it goats,⁷ wine,⁸ dogs,⁹ and cakes prepared by the Vestals from the mola salsa made from the first ears of the harvest of the preceding year¹⁰ were sacrificed. The two latter were probably burned on the altar as neither is mentioned in the references to the food eaten. The two former, since no writer makes a statement to the

¹See p. 34 f.

²Acron ad Hor. Od. 3. 18, 13.

³Wissowa, in Roscher Lex. 1² 1454 ff.; Ihm, in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll Real Encyc. 6. 2054 ff.; Fowler Roman Festivals 257 ff.

⁴Fowler Roman Festivals p. 257.

⁵C. I. L. 1² pp. 212, 310, 223.

⁶See Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 209 ff.

⁷Valerius Maximus 2. 2, 9; Ov. Fast. 2. 361-2.

⁸Plut. Rom. 21.

⁹Valerius Maximus 2. 2, 9.

¹⁰Serv. ad Bucol. 8. 82.

contrary, were apparently offered to the deity on an altar and with the usual form.¹ That Ovid calls the meal exigua while Valerius Maximus implies that there was a somewhat sumptuous supply of food and drink accompanied by a celebration that approached boisterousness may be explained by the fact that the former was probably imagining the circumstances of the earlier period and the latter describing those of the later.

Who the deity was and what was the conception of the worshippers have been matters of much dispute. Fowler² says that according to Ovid³ the god was Faunus, according to Livy⁴ Inuus, and according to Servius⁵ Liber; and the same scholar adds that there was no Lupercus or Faunus Lupercus.⁶ Neither does he believe that Juno was the deity.⁷ Whoever the god might have been, it does seem that there was a definite conception of communion with him.

11. The Feast of the Salii

Although the evidence with regard to the sacred meal of the Salii is very meager, the Latin authors⁸ seem to imply that there was a sacrifice in which ground grain and an animal were used. Since these priests made the offering, Mars must have been the god; and as no unusual characteristics are mentioned it is quite probable that the method by which the deity received his share of the food was the one usual among the Romans.⁹ Further-

¹Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People 178-181.

²Roman Festivals p. 312.

³Fast. 2. 361.

⁴l. 5.

⁵Ad Aen. 8. 343.

⁶See Justin 43. 1. Cf. Wissowa in Roscher Lex., s. v.

Lupercus.

⁷Arnob. 2. 23.

⁸Festus, ed. Lindsay, p. 141; Varro L. L. 5. 110. Cf.

Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 558.

⁹Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People p. 179 f.

more, at the close of each day of the ceremony with the shields the Salii were participants in a sumptuous banquet, though in the classical age there seems to be no real indication that they considered the god present at the meal or regarded it as a means of communion with him.¹ Yet the passing through the streets, the striking of the sacred shields, the dancing and chanting at certain places, and the resting and feasting each evening at a different location were very ancient.² In the time of Quintilian even the words of the carmen used in the ceremony were scarcely intelligible.³

On the assumption that Mars was a deity of vegetation and that the clashing of the rods on the shields was for the purpose of driving out evil spirits,⁴ there seem to be two possible explanations of the meal: one, that the servants of the deity by eating were entering into communion with him that he might more willingly bless the crops or perhaps even be more able to do so;⁵ the other, that the evil spirits were being feasted so that they would depart without doing harm. Frazer⁶ gives parallels to the latter, but his case is not a strong one. The former is certainly more in keeping with other ancient practices of the Romans, such as those found in the Terminalia and the Parilia.⁷ A manifestation of the importance of the rite and therefore of the original meal is to be seen in the fact that Scipio, one of the Salii, could not

¹Festus, ed. Lindsay, p. 329; Suet. Claud. 33.

²Dionys. 2. 70; Liv. 1. 20, 4; Plut. Num. 13; Serv. ad Aen. 8. 285, 663; C. I. L. 6. 2158. Cf. Marquardt Handbuch der Römischen Altertümer 6. 432 f.; Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 557 ff.

³Quint. 1. 6, 40. Cf. Hor. Ep. 2. 1, 36.

⁴Frazer has made a large collection of such instances; Golden Bough 9. 198 ff.; and The Fasti of Ovid 3. 65 ff.

⁵Smith Religion of the Semites p. 373.

⁶Golden Bough 9. 119.

⁷Fowler Roman Festivals p. 40 f.; Frazer Golden Bough 9. 229; The Fasti of Ovid 3. 67.

make a journey on one of these religious days and therefore was compelled to remain inactive while the army crossed the strait to meet the enemy.¹

12. The Feast in Honor of Vacuna

The feast in honor of Vacuna was of very great antiquity and was conducted before the hearth in her shrine with the sort of simple equipment used in the early Italian home.² Although nothing is said regarding the food used it probably consisted largely of far and fruges such as have been mentioned in connection with meals like those of the curiae.³ Ovid's implication is that the order of ceremony was similar to that of the family meal; hence a portion of the food which was on the table would be burned on the hearth⁴ and the worshippers probably ate the rest, just as the members of the familia did. The rite took place in Sabine territory and was conducted by Sabine people,⁵ but to ascertain the purpose of the meal and the nature of the goddess is difficult. The waters of Lake Cutilia were sacred to her as a deity who healed not only those who bathed in but also those who drank of them.⁶ Hence it seems that the Vacuna known to the Latin writers was a goddess of healing. By drinking the waters sacred to her the suppliant in earlier times might even have thought that he was imbibing the deity herself.⁷ Yet in spite of the fact that the greater part of the specific evidence points in the direction of

¹Liv. 37. 33, 7.

²Ov. Fast. 6. 305-8.

³Dionys. 2. 23.

⁴Serv. ad Aen. 1. 730; cf. Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 162.

⁵Hor. Ep. 1. 10, 49; Dessau Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae 3404, 3435, 3486, 9248; Plin. N. H. 2. 209; 3. 109; Porphyrius ad Ep. 1. 10, 49.

⁶Plin. N. H. 31. 10; 31. 59; Varro (quoted by Acron ad Hor. Ep. 1. 10, 49); Dionys. 1. 15; 1. 14, 1; cf. Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 4. 226. See also Vitruv. 8. 3, 5; Strabo 5. 3, 1; Suet. Vesp. 2 and 24; Dessau Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae 3485.

⁷Smith Religion of the Semites p. 154.

a divinity of healing there was much confusion in the minds of the ancients as to her nature.¹ Preller² may be right in thinking that about her centered the worship of the early Sabines and that Reate was probably the principal seat of the cult. Is it not possible, then, that the varied appellations of the goddess arose from an original deity who protected a people that led a pastoral and agricultural life but were forced by circumstances to engage in war from time to time? The explanation of the predominance of the healing function in historical times may lie in the fact that as Rome became more powerful and the Sabine government less so, the goddess became obscure but was still in a vague way associated with the Sabines in general and with Reate in particular. Then when the waters became famous for their healing qualities, she was probably associated with them; and, while the rustic feast persisted, the participants were no longer the Sabines who through communion with her pledged loyalty to her and to each other but rather those whom she had healed. This, as Frazer³ suggests, would be a meal in which the worshippers who had benefited by the waters testified to their gratitude to the goddess by joining in a thanksgiving service.

13. The Feast in Honor of Anna Perenna

On the Ides of March at the first milestone on the Flaminian Way⁴ there was an old popular festival in honor of Anna Perenna,⁵ but just what was the nature of the sacrifice is not known.⁶ Perhaps it was an animal offered in the usual manner.⁷

¹Acron ad Hor. Ep. 1. 10, 49; Porphyrius ad Hor. Ep. 1. 10, 49; Ausonius Ep. 4. 101.

²Römische Mythologie 1. 409.

³The Fasti of Ovid 4. 228.

⁴C. I. L. 1² p. 322; Martial. 4. 63, 17.

⁵Ov. Fast. 3. 523 ff.

⁶Macrob. 1. 12, 6.

⁷Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People pp. 179-

Apparently she was the goddess of the year,¹ although this has been disputed by Altheim. The words of Lydus,² suggest that public prayers accompanied the sacrifice. And it seems that the people not only drank wine but ate a meal in honor of the deity.³ Furthermore, there is some implication that she was present, though unseen,⁴ for they ate in the fields in which she was supposed to have had her abode. The details of the whole are very obscure, but where there was a sacrifice and a feast it was customary not only among the Romans but among other peoples also for a part of the animal sacrificed to form the principal article of food. In addition, since there was so much drinking of wine and since libations of this sort often accompanied sacrifices, perhaps there was a libation to Anna Perenna. The attitude of the people was one of prayer that the ensuing year might be prosperous and Ovid adds that of supplication for longevity. Frazer⁵ says that the activities depicted by Ovid⁶ find parallels in other lands "when the licence accorded to the sexes was a relic of magical rites performed for the purpose of maintaining the fertility of nature alike in greenwoods and in man and beast". The ancient origin of the ceremony is shown by its nature as well as by its being held in a wood.⁷ Its importance in the lives of the people, if the conjecture of Frazer is correct, must have been great, for things vital to them were concerned; but as there is no mention of it in

¹Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 241; Usener Rhein. Mus. 30. 206 ff; Fowler Roman Festivals p. 52 ff.; Altheim Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 22. 91 ff.; Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 3. 111.

²De Mens. 4. 36.

³Ov. Fast. 3. 525-26; 531-34; 655-56.

⁴Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 3. 112 ff.

⁵The Fasti of Ovid 3. 111.

⁶Fast. 3. 527-38

⁷Martial. 4. 63, 17. Cf. Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 241.

the rustic calendars or in those of Philocalus and Silvius it had probably died out in the early empire.¹ This may be explained

by the fact that the people came to be more and more attracted by spectacles and games; and also by the ever-increasing cosmopolitanism of the city populace, which would be continually losing interest in old Roman customs which it did not understand.²

14. The Meal Propter Viam

There was a sacred meal propter viam eaten after a sacrifice to insure prosperity and safety on a journey.³ Nonius⁴ throws some light upon what animal was used in the sacrifice by mentioning bidentes, and a somewhat disputed passage in Plautus⁵ may possibly indicate that such rites sometimes took place in the evening. The offering was made to Sancus--perhaps on an altar in the usual form⁶ since no special ceremony is mentioned. The human participants were those intending to make a journey and their principal article of food was probably the flesh of the victim; but the outstanding feature is that whatever was not eaten had to be burned. This seems to be a survival from an early period in which it was believed that the consecrated food was too holy to be left to come in contact with "unclean" things;⁷ hence in the beginning there must have been the conception of unusually close communion with the deity. In that time there was pressing need for divine protection as every stranger was regarded with a degree of hostility⁸ and hospitality was frequently of short duration.⁹ In

¹Fowler Roman Festivals p. 50.

²Fowler Roman Festivals p. 50.

³Festus, ed. Lindsay, p. 229; Macrob. 2. 2, 4.

⁴Ed. Quicherat, p. 53.

⁵Rud. 149-50; cf. Cerf, An Interpretation of Plautus, American Philological Association, 37, XL f.

⁶Fowler Religious Experience of the Roman People pp. 178-81.

⁷See Smith Religion of the Semites p. 221. Cf. Lev. 7. 16-17.

⁸Smith Religion of the Semites p. 76.

⁹Frazer Golden Bough 3. 130.

addition to this there were few safe public stopping places and the roads were infested with dangers. Although Sancus seems to have had other functions pertaining to good faith,¹ Tertullian,² who in all probability was expressing the general popular conception shows that his role as god of hospitality was very widely accepted among the Italians. In spite of the fact that in later times Sancus was identified with Hercules, there is no doubt that he was a true Italian deity and that as a result the origin of the ritual propter viam was also Italic. Cato,³ Silius Italicus,⁴ and Ovid⁵ state that he was a Sabine deity; and on bronze tablets found at ancient Iguvium bearing a long inscription in the Umbrian dialect he is mentioned.⁶

15. The Birthday Feast

In Rome every man had his genius and every woman her Juno;⁷ in honor of these were held the birthday feasts, the most important of which was that of the pater familias.⁸ On such occasions the air was heavy with incense and the god, as well as the worshippers, received a bountiful supply of wine along with the honey cakes⁹ concerning whose number there has been some discussion. They do not, however, seem to correspond to the number of years the person celebrating his birthday had lived, for Mar-

4. 158. ¹Cf. Dionys. 9. 60, 8; 2. 49, 2; Frazer The Fasti of Ovid

²Ad Nat. 2. 9.

³In Dionys. 2. 49, 2.

⁴8. 420-22 ff.

⁵Fast. 6. 213 ff.

⁶See Frazer The Fasti of Ovid 4. 163. Cf. Wissowa, in Roscher Lex. 4. 315 ff.; Dionys. 2. 49, 2; Varro L. L. 5. 66.

⁷Serv. ad Aen. 6. 743; Apul. de Deo Socr. 151; Petron. 25; Tib. 4. 6; Plin. N. H. 2. 16; Lygdam. 6. 48. Cf. Roscher Lex. Genius 1. 614 ff.; Juno 2. 594.

⁸Censor. 2. 2; Maecen. in Sen. Ep. 114. 5; Tibull. 2. 2, 1; 4. 5, 19; 4. 6, 1; C. I. L. 10. 860-61.

⁹Ov. Trist. 3. 13, 15; 5. 5, 9; Tibull. 1. 7, 49 ff.; 2. 2, 1 ff.; 4. 5, 9; 4. 6, 14; Persius 2. 2, 3. .

tiall in mentioning incense and cakes says quinquagesima, not quinquaginta liba and Ovid² does not say how many cakes there were.³ The offerings mentioned are bloodless,⁴ but Horace⁵ in one ode says a pig is to be offered to his Genius and in another⁶ speaks of a lamb. Schmidt⁷ thinks there may be some doubt as to whether these animals were actually offered to the Genius although the greater number of scholars seem to disagree with him.⁸ Perhaps the tradition of a bloodless offering comes from the earlier period when animal sacrifice was not common. In any case there is no question that the deity, whether the man's genius or the woman's Juno⁹ received his share of the food by its being burned on an altar.

The participants in the meal were the friends, clients, and relatives as well as the familia of the person whose birthday was being honored. To these the invitation was generally oral, but sometimes it was written.¹⁰ The jovial, festive spirit is shown by the flowers decking the altar¹¹ and by the white garb worn to insure happiness and good luck;¹² but the precominant attitude is shown by the prayers that the deity remain near to bless and that he return often to his festival.¹³ Thus the worshippers evidently believed that when they sacrificed and prayed to the

¹10. 24, 4.

²Trist. 3. 13, 17.

³Cf. Schmidt Geburtstag im Altertum p. 26.

⁴Cf. Censor. de Die Natali Liber 2.

⁵3. 17, 14 ff.

⁶4. 11, 5-8.

⁷Geburtstag im Altertum p. 26.

⁸Cf. Birt, in Roscher Lex. 12 1617; Otto, in Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll Real-Encyc. 7. 1161; Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 177 n. 4.

⁹Cf. Tibull. 4. 6, 1.

¹⁰Apollinar. Carm. 17 and 20. Cf. Geburtstag im Altertum p. 28; Wissowa Religion und Kultus der Römer p. 177.

¹¹Ov. Trist. 3. 13, 15; Hor. Ep. 2. 1, 144.

¹²Porph. ad Hor. Od. 1. 36, 10; Hor. Sat. 2. 2, 61; Ov. Trist. 3. 13, 14; 5. 5, 14; 5. 7, 4; Pers. 1. 15; Tibull. 1. 7, 64.

¹³Tibull. 2. 2, 1; Ov. Trist. 3. 13, 18; 5. 5, 19, 24; Martial 4. 1.

divinity they were entering into communion with him that he might bless with longevity and prosperity the person whose birthday was being honored. Schmidt¹ thinks that the festival probably occurred each month, but his argument is not convincing. On the other hand such passages as that in Persius' second satire (line 2) imply that the occasion was annual.

Along with games and other types of celebrations there were public feasts in honor of the birthdays of outstanding men, especially the emperors.² These often assumed the form of meals given on the Capitol for senatus populusque Romanus³ and were frequently at the expense of one man.⁴ It was not unusual for presents to be distributed to the people or the army,⁵ but the direct religious bearing to be found in the private feast was sometimes entirely lacking.

¹Geburtstag im Altertum p. 24; Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll Real-Encyc. 7. 1142.

²Spart. Geta 3. 8; Dio Cass. 44. 4; Tac. Hist. 2. 95; C. I. L. 10. 8375; 11. 3303.

³Dio Cass. 54. 26, 30; 55. 26; 58. 12; C. I. L. 11. 3303; 12. 5905.

⁴Dio Cass. 54. 26.

⁵Dio Cass. 69. 8; 61. 18; Cassidor. Hist. Trip. 6. 30.

CONCLUSION

The study of the details of the sacred meal of the older Roman religion has shown that when offerings were burned on an altar this took place in the majority of cases before the food was eaten by the people; the offering to the Lares at the family meal and, in part, that to Bona Dea in the worship of the Fratres Arvales have been noted as exceptions. The type of food used was in the earliest period usually bloodless, yet when at that time an animal was sacrificed, as in the Feriae Latinae, it was regarded as especially sacred. Pastoral products mark the period before agriculture was prevalent and in the oldest feasts wine was lacking. In some meals the identification of the deity and his relation to the life of the people have been puzzling but this is in accord with the early Italian's dim conception of the personality of a supernatural being. The direct practical relation of the feast to the needs of the individual or community, however, are usually fairly clear.

Although the number of meals in which by the historical period there remained traces of belief of the actual incarnation of the deity in the food eaten by the people are few, yet these seem to indicate that in the oldest Roman religion such occasions were not rare. The instances in which there was the conception of a meal served on a table at which the divinity was actually present to share the food and thus enter into communion with the worshipper seem likewise to be reminiscent of an earlier age. Since in most cases there is indication that at some time the image of the deity was entirely lacking, it may reasonably be inferred that if one

were able to trace all Roman feasts to their sources, he would probably always find this true. In the majority of Italic meals the food was offered to the divinity, who was invisibly present, by its being burned on an altar, or, if liquid, poured out in libation. But, while the sense of communion always seemed quite strong where there was the belief that the deity was incarnate in the food or that he was present to share it from a table, there was within the third and the fourth types considerable variation in this respect. In meals such as that of the Bona Dea, where it is possible to trace the different stages of development by the kind of sacrifice made, formalism increased, images--through Greek influence--appeared, and in almost direct ratio the reality of faith, along with the direct bearing upon the worshippers' life, decreased.

The feasts of the early Italians, however, reveal a lack of the magical, a joyous atmosphere, a freedom from mere form, and a staunch faith in divine beings who were, if properly propitiated, willing to cooperate with men--all of which are characteristics common to primitive peoples who live close to nature.

